

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8665

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS PRETORIA 3444

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : PINT RF

SUBJECT: RHODESIAN FRONT CONGRESS

REF: A) CAPE TOWN A-2; B) PRETORIA 3047, OCTOBER 2, 1972

1. FOLLOWING PATTERN OF LAST FEW YEARS (REFTEL), RULING RHODESIAN FRONT (RF) CONGRESS WAS HELD BEHIND CLOSED DOORS SEPTEMBER 20-22. ONLY PRIME MINISTER SMITH'S SPEECH TO DELEGATES SEPTEMBER 21 OPEN TO PUBLIC. MAJOR ISSUES REPORTED TO BE SETTLEMENT WITH BRITAIN, SECURITY, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL AUTHORITIES FOR AFRICANS.

2. SMITH ONCE AGAIN TOLD RHODESIANS TO FORGET ABOUT SETTLEMENT "FOR THE TIME BEING AT ANY RATE AND GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF RUNNING RHODESIA." HE REAFFIRMED INTENTION NOT TO ENGAGE IN FURTHER SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

3. WITHOUT MENTIONING ANY ORGANIZATION, SMITH SAID CONTACT WITH AFRICAN POLITICIANS HAD BEEN MADE AND "THERE ARE MANY THINGS TAKING PLACE WHICH I WOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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BE RELUCTANT TO DIVULGE NOW." AFRICAN NATIONAL

CONGRESS (ANC) ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 23 THAT IT WAS AMONG GROUPS HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH GOVERNMENT BUT DENIED SMITH CLAIM THAT IT WAS AFRICANS AND NOT RHODESIA GOVERNMENT WHICH DESIRED SECRECY.

4. SMITH CLAIMED THAT 130 GUERRILLAS, 29 MORE THAN ANNOUNCED IN SECURITY FORCE COMMUNIQUE, HAVE BEEN KILLED SINCE LAST DECEMBER AND SIMILAR NUMBER CAPTURED. BY INCREASING PROFESSIONAL SECURITY FORCES, SMITH SAID GOVERNMENT HOPED BY NEXT YEAR TO AVOID CALLING UP TERRITORIAL TROOPS (RESERVISTS) MORE THAN ONCE A YEAR.

5. THIRD MAJOR ISSUE OF CONGRESS WAS "PROVINCIALIZATION" (REFAIR), PLAN FOR REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS FOR RHODESIAN AFRICANS WHICH IS SEEN BY SOUTH AFRICAN OBSERVERS AS RHODESIAN VERSION OF HOMELANDS POLICY. SPEAKING ON RESOLUTION DEMANDING IMMEDIATE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME, INTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER LANCE SMITH REPORTEDLY TOLD CONGRESS DELEGATES SEPTEMBER 20 THAT INITIAL STAGES OF TWO REGIONAL AUTHORITIES FOR AFRICANS IN MATABELELAND AND MASHONALAND HAD ALREADY BEEN SET UP. PROVINCIALIZATION ENVISAGES DEVOLUTION OF POWER OVER LOCAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS TO REGIONAL AUTHORITIES WITH MATTERS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE REMAINING WITH CENTRAL (WHITE) GOVERNMENT.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH DETAILS OF SECRET CONGRESS LACKING, IT APPEARS SMITH ONCE AGAIN SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED MORE EXTREME VIEWS OF RIGHT-WING AND REMAINS UNDISPUTED LEADER OF RF. NEVERTHELESS, RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT'S TREND TO THE RIGHT CONTINUES. DISCLOSURE OF SMITH'S CONTACTS WITH AFRICANS WAS ONLY BRIGHT NOTE IN REPORTS ON RP CONGRESS.
SMITH

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